

FCC Hearing 10.31.07

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FCC MEETING
PUBLIC HEARING

OCTOBER 31, 2007

WASHINGTON, D.C.

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ATTENDEES:

Kevin Martin, FCC Commissioner
Marlene Dortch
Michael J. Copps, Commissioner
Jonathan S. Adelstein, Commissioner
Deborah Taylor Tate, Commissioner
Robert McDowell, Commissioner
Monica Desai
Jeremy Kisell
Louis Sigalos
Marcellus Alexander
Bob Edwards
Lisa Fager Bediako
Kim Grandy
Jim Goodman
Wade Henderson
Dan Isett
Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, Sr.
Andrew Schwartzman
Christopher Sterling
Mark Cooper

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PUBLIC SPEAKERS:

Joe Torrez
George Tedesci
Mike Wassenaar
Carolyn Byerly
Kevin McCarron
James Coleman
Kate Blofson
Sarah Sieberberg
Michael Shay
Bruce Levinson
Samantha Miller
Carol Jenkins
Liz Humes
Susan Meehan
Rosa Clemente

17 Nanz Riccard
18 Christian Melendez
19 Alex Allen
20 Adam Lynn
21 Michael Halperin
22 Nickey Guerra

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1 PUBLIC SPEAKERS (contd.):
2 Josh Silver
3 Wendy Thompson
4 Alexandra Russell
5 Garland Nixon
6 Patricia Omana
7 Lynn Erskine
8 Francwa Sims
9 Sondra Levin
10 Shireen Mitchell
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1 P R O C E E D I N G S
2 KEVIN MARTIN: Madam Secretary, if you
3 could announce then our next steps for today's
4 meeting.
5 MARLENE DORTCH: Okay, this concludes
6 the agenda for our open meeting. We will now begin
7 today's localism hearing. Along with competition
8 and diversity, promoting localism is a key goal of
9 the Commission's media ownership rules. The purpose
10 of the hearing is to gather informing from
11 consumers, industry, civic organizations and others
12 on broadcasters role in their local communities and
13 proposed changes to our rules.
14 KEVIN MARTIN: This is the Federal
15 Communications Commission's 6th public hearing on
16 localism and I want to first take a moment to
17 welcome everyone and thank you all for agreeing to
18 participate and it is important, in this important
19 meeting today.
20 Before we begin with our panel
21 presentations, I think all of the Commissioners want
22 to do, have some opening statements, I assume is

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1 that correct?
2 MICHAEL COPPS: I do.
3 KEVIN MARTIN: Why don't actually then
4 we go to the Board of Commissioner Council and Chief
5 to start out for us.
6 MICHAEL COPPS: Thank you all for being
7 here this morning, you came on short notice, some
8 from afar, and had to prepare on the turn of a dime,
9 but your presence attests to your dedication and
10 public spiritedness and we are grateful for that.

11 You're going to hear a lot of nice words
12 today about localism, about how localism is one of
13 the core values of broadcast regulation, about how
14 from the earliest days of broadcasting we've
15 required licensees to serve the needs and interests
16 of their local communities, about how localism is
17 good for viewers, good for business and good for the
18 future of our democracy and it's all true.

19 But my greatest fears is that all those
20 nice words will float into the ether and we'll walk
21 away and congratulate ourselves that we've struck a
22 blow for localism, meanwhile consolidation continues

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1 to choke the life blood out of localism with its
2 outsourced news, homogenized playlists and distant
3 ownership and meanwhile consolidation denegrates
4 diversity, denies minorities and women and
5 diminishes our already distorted democratic
6 dialogue. It seems to get worse with almost each
7 passing week.

8 I for one can wait no longer. If we
9 truly believe in localism, if it's not just lip
10 service, the time has come to do something about it.

11 First, let's acknowledge that the loss
12 of localism is not something that was inevitable.
13 It was a conscious choice. It was a conscious
14 choice.

15 Back in the 1980s we had a Chairman of
16 the FCC who famously said that a television set was
17 nothing but a toaster with pictures and that's how
18 he and his accomplices set about to treat it, just
19 another household appliance.

20 So they did away with the requirements
21 that promoted localism, like talking to your
22 community about the issues that concern the people

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1 who live there, like guidelines at license renewal
2 time that examined the station's commitment to local
3 programming and like a license renewal process that
4 took place every three years to ensure
5 accountability to the community rather than every
6 eight years to give convenience to the industry.

7 So now we have no more community
8 dialogue, no more real accountability, no process to
9 hold stations to their commitment to serve the
10 people. It's all gone, not by chance, but by
11 design.

12 Think about it, why on earth would some
13 little commission think that it had to write
14 (inaudible) mail to remove explicit performance
15 requirements from broadcasters who are granted
16 exclusive rights to use public property.

17 Which brings me to the current
18 proceeding. This is the last official public
19 hearing in connection with the localism notice of
20 inquiry that was launched in 2004. While I
21 appreciate the Chairman's commitment to complete the
22 localism proceeding before addressing the media

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1 ownership rules, the question remains what it means
2 to complete the proceeding.

3 Let me be clear what I mean. Completing
4 the proceeding means to me at a minimum issuing a

5 notice of proposed rule-making with clear
6 recommendations giving the public adequate time to
7 comment on the specific proposals to put localism
8 back into broadcasting and a timetable for final
9 Commission action.

10 And let's be clear, this is not just
11 Commissioner Mike Copps' view. It's a bipartisan
12 view from Congress. Recently Democratic Senator
13 Byron Doylgan and Republican Senator Trent Lott told
14 us in no uncertain terms that given the importance
15 of localism, a mere report is not enough. They want
16 recommendations and a formal notice of proposed
17 rule-making with at least 90 days for public
18 comment. This must be done, they said, before
19 moving forward with the ownership proceeding and
20 that's a quote.

21 We just received another bipartisan
22 letter from Republican Senator Olympia Snow and

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1 Democratic Senator Bill Nelson calling on the FCC to
2 seriously address localism and pending diversity
3 recommendations prior to acting on media ownership.

4 These issues transcend party labels and
5 are in no way unique to red States or blue States.
6 They are grass-roots concerns.

7 The best way to address these concerns
8 may be through an honest to goodness license renewal
9 process and a re-invigorated public interest
10 standard. The bottom line here is that the FCC just
11 has to get out of the business of allowing medic
12 environments to acquire new licenses or renew
13 existing ones without requiring that every licensee
14 will actually use the public airwaves to serve the
15 public interest.

16 We will soon know it appears whether the
17 Commission's rhetoric about localism is the real
18 thing or whether this proceeding is being truncated
19 because the Commission needs to place a checkmark in
20 the localism box that stands in the way of loosening
21 such ownership rules as newspaper broadcasts
22 cross-ownership that powerful industry players are

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1 pushing like mad.

2 But localism must never be seen as a
3 means to an end. It's an end in itself. It's at
4 the heart of what the public interest is all about.
5 All deliberate speed in getting some localism back,
6 by all means, a rush to judgment to clear the way
7 for more big media mergers, no way.

8 Right now there are too many Americans
9 openly wondering whether this is all a great big
10 show. Pretty window-dressing to distract the public
11 so the FCC and big media can cut their deal in
12 peace.

13 No one on this Commission, even if some
14 feel differently from me about the pros and cons of
15 changing the ownership rules should want to
16 perpetuate those kinds of public misgivings about
17 the FCC. We need a process that allays fears rather
18 than one that creates fears.

19 I've received an E-mail yesterday from a
20 gentleman who works at a small market radio station
21 in the Midwest. In the E-mail he talks about the

22 difference between a truly local station and the

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1 stations owned by big corporations in dealing with
2 heavy rain storms that were hitting the area.
3 Here's what he wrote about the big
4 stations, quote, "These stations have their
5 programming piped in from another community.
6 They've also signed up for a service for their
7 weather reporting which is recorded and sent from
8 1,000 miles away. There were flood warnings and
9 flash flood warnings, yet there was never mention of
10 that severe weather during the peak of the storms.
11 Nobody even works in those buildings. They have an
12 engineer come in to take meter readings and check on
13 things a couple times per day.

14 "If this is the type of localism we
15 ought to expect, then the public interest is not
16 being served by these companies," he went on.

17 "And finally, they can raise all the
18 money they want to for local charities and air
19 numerous public service announcements, but if the
20 local citizens are not even warned about looming
21 severe weather, what good is it," end quote.

22 That's a good question and it goes

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1 beyond the weather forecast to whether we can have a
2 media environment in this country that reflects our
3 communities and diversity and creativity and that
4 nourishes the civic dialogue on which our future
5 depends.

6 Let's, for heaven's sake, treat this
7 issue with some sense of civic sobriety and
8 seriousness of purpose.

9 It's in this vain that I look forward to
10 hearing from all our panels and public today.

11 Thank you again all for being here.

12 KEVIN MARTIN: Thank you.

13 To Mr. Adelstein.

14 JONATHAN ADELSTEIN: Thank you, this is
15 the final hearing of the localism task force. I'm
16 very pleased that at the urging of key members of
17 Congress, this otherwise dormant proceeding was
18 revived and today we're here again listening to an
19 expert set of panelists and the public.

20 The important questions (inaudible) with
21 the proceeding today are will we do anything
22 productive with what we've learned. We've been

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1 across the country. Will it lead to real changes in
2 how we hold media outlets accountable to their local
3 communities. (Inaudible) entire proceeding just a
4 chore to get done so that media giants can have
5 their way with even greater media consolidation.

6 The lack of adequate advanced public
7 notice of today's hearing raises real concerns about
8 how serious we are about public output. Despite
9 unanimous approval weeks ago to get this done and do
10 this today, it wasn't announced to the public until
11 the last possible moment allowed by law, just five
12 business days ago late at night.

13 Now despite this unnecessary hurdle, I'm
14 pleased we've assembled such a great panel and an
15 impressive panel of witnesses on such short notices.

16 I thank Chairman Martin for his cooperation in
17 working with us to do this in such a short period of
18 time and I thank all of our witnesses for going
19 through all the hurdles that you had to jump to get
20 here and to share with us your views on this
21 critical issue.

22 I am disappointed, though, that I

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1 haven't been permitted to meet with the FCC staff
2 that co-chaired the localism task force. I made a
3 request for this last week and I just don't think
4 it's acceptable that Commission staff aren't
5 permitted to meet with every Commissioner.

6 I'd remind all my colleagues that the
7 staff works for the Commission, not just the
8 Chairman. Any instruction to deny us meetings or
9 information is anathema to the spirit of the
10 Commission in Federal law.

11 As we conclude this final public
12 localism hearing, it's fair to ask what we have
13 accomplished. There are two basic issues at hand.
14 What steps can we take to enhance the responsiveness
15 of our media to our local communities and does media
16 consolidation enhance or detract from service to
17 local communities.

18 When the localism task force was
19 launched, we were promised rigorous studies and
20 clear policy and legislative recommendations. We've
21 seen neither any studies nor any recommendations
22 thus far. After the expenditure of over 350,000

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1 dollars of taxpayer funds and many staff resources,
2 the task force owes us solid studies and solid
3 recommendations on which to base immediate action by
4 the Commission.

5 The only study that actually came out
6 was one that was leaked to Senator Boxer at a public
7 hearing.

8 Certainly before we address the media
9 ownership rules we need to implement concrete steps
10 to enhance localism. A number of members of
11 Congress, as Commissioner Copps have pointed out,
12 have appropriately asked that we do so and we should
13 heed their good advice.

14 This doesn't mean we should trot out
15 some half measures and say there you go, we're done.
16 It means we need to put in place rules that improve
17 accountability of broadcast media outlets to the
18 communities to which they are licensed, which
19 shouldn't simply provide a set of best practices for
20 broadcasters.

21 We shouldn't simply revise an
22 out-of-date manual and instruct the public that it's

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1 their responsibility to get the most from their
2 local station, nor should we simply get a report
3 that sugar-coats the issues from the localism task
4 force, a task force that really has been
5 functionally abolished, maybe that's why I couldn't
6 get a meeting with them.

7 We all know the issues. We expect real
8 and concrete recommendations to form the basis for a
9 substantive Commission response to the many concerns

10 that were raised by an array of concerned citizens
11 from all across this great country. We also need to
12 complete action on improving the number of women and
13 people of color who own broadcast media outlets in
14 this country.

15 I propose the immediate creation of a
16 task force, an independent panel that would help us
17 to get an action agenda that we can act on quickly
18 before this proceeding, before we finalize the media
19 ownership rules. The Reverend Jesse Jackson is here
20 today and he's offered to serve on such a panel. We
21 just came from a meeting hosted at Rainbow PUSH in
22 Chicago. I'm glad we came out there and thank you

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1 for hosting us.

2 It's a city where people of color
3 represent two-thirds of the population, and yet they
4 own just 5 percent of the broadcast stations. To
5 me -- today's media landscape does not reflect the
6 diversity of America. We've got to carefully weigh
7 whether media ownership that doesn't reflect the
8 communities to whom they're licensed are truly
9 delivering local service that reflects the diversity
10 of issues that face the entire community, including
11 women, including people of color.

12 As far as I know, none of our studies
13 address that fundamental localism question. We
14 can't proceed in good conscious until it is
15 answered.

16 It's also clear from our hearings that
17 local issues that the electorate needs to know about
18 aren't being covered in a way that prepares voters
19 to make educated decisions. The problem we hear
20 from people as we go to these hearings across the
21 country is that breaking news is being replaced with
22 breaking gossip. Community after community, we hear

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1 from citizens that serious coverage of local and
2 State Governments is diminished. There's a virtual
3 black-out of coverage of State and local elections
4 and candidates.

5 And while news operations say they have
6 to slash resources in this difficult environment,
7 some are offering up to a million dollars to get an
8 interview with Paris Hilton.

9 Real investigative journalism and file
10 for reporting have given way to an if it bleeds, it
11 leads mentality.

12 Now there are a lot of localism options
13 on the table. They include clarifying our public
14 interests obligations, strengthening our license
15 renewal process, requiring ascertainment, enhancing
16 public disclosure, broadcasters issues and program
17 listings, (inaudible) locals and requirements on
18 multi-cast stations and improving access to low
19 powered and non-commercial station licenses.

20 We need to approve real meaningful
21 rules, not just another notice of inquiry or
22 proposed rules before we move forward with media

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1 ownership.

2 With regard to the effect of media
3 consolidation on localism, the public has spoken.

The public comments we received at hearings across the country were overwhelmingly negative on how consolidation has detracted from the responsiveness of local media outlets to local concerns.

We also heard eloquent arguments about the potential benefits of consolidation, but these were all from invited witnesses who actually worked or owned media outlets, not from the public at large.

And while I appreciate the arguments on both sides, the law requires us to serve the public interests, not the interests of the media giants that we oversee and the public is not interested in further media consolidation.

This was confirmed again yesterday in a polled Commission by the Media Democracy Coalition, just being released today, overwhelming majorities of Republicans and Democrats consider media consolidation a problem and in nearly equal

proportions.

This confirms, once again, as reflected on the bipartisan concern on Capitol Hill that this is not a partisan issue. Americans distrust big media, whether those are coming from the right, from the left and virtually everybody in between. Distrusted media, like big Government, I think is rooted in the American spirit.

It's no surprise that by a margin of 57 percent to 30 percent the public favors making it illegal to own a dominant newspaper and a TV station in the same city. Again, the margins are about the same for liberals, moderates and conservatives. The poll also found that the public prefers local news sources, the very ones threatened by consolidation. It also found the public is concerned that consolidation will produce even more bias into a media world they already consider too biased.

Now I admit it's unusual to cite polling data in a Commission proceeding and I don't normally do it. In this case, though, the law is simple and

clear. We are to promote the public interest. What the public thinks is, therefore, of great consequence to fulfilling our statutory obligation. It would be the height of arrogance for those of us here inside the beltway in this building to assert that somehow we know better what's good for the public than they know for themselves.

If we ignore what we've heard across the nation and what we're about to hear today, all of our hearings would have been a sham to provide cover for a pre-determined outcome. We must listen to the public. It's not just a moral obligation, it's the law.

So the Commission welcomes all of you here today and all of our guests who are going to speak. I hope we won't just listen with an open mind, but we'll factor what you say into our actions. Listening to you while commendable is the easy part. It's actually taking what you say and acting on it that seems to be the most difficult

21 part.

22 So thank you all for coming and joining

0023 us here today.

2 KEVIN MARTIN: Thank you.

3 Commissioner Tate.

4 DEBORAH TAYLOR TATE: Thank you,

5 Mr. Chairman, I want to add my welcome to all of you
6 all who are here, our esteemed panelists and members
7 of the public who will be meeting. The gentleman
8 from Virginia and I are new to the Commission, since
9 you all have been involved with this process and so
10 we're really here to listen to you all today.

11 This is, of course, the last of our six
12 localism hearings and thank you all for all the time
13 that you've taken to participate, to comment and to
14 be here today.

15 Since October of 2003, the FCC has held
16 hearings all across America. The process actually
17 started years before I arrived at the FCC and has
18 continued throughout my tenure from Monterey,
19 California, to Portland, Maine, literally from sea
20 to shining sea we've heard from hundreds, if not
21 thousands, of American citizens on this important
22 issue.

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1 And while the debate gets passionate,
2 often, I think that there's certainly something that
3 we all agree on and that is the importance of local
4 news and local information to citizens, to every one
5 of us as consumers in every corner of America.

6 It's the local news outlets that know
7 our communities best. They provide the types of
8 information on which citizens can rely, local
9 weather and traffic, local high school football
10 scores, community events, school programs, local
11 political races and on and on. There are also many
12 times first responders in time of crisis, whether
13 it's a crime or a weather disaster or public health
14 emergency, local news outlets are the first to
15 communicate often critical information to their
16 citizens.

17 Having grown up in a very small town, a
18 small media market, I saw firsthand the importance
19 of localism in a small market. Listening to WGNS
20 every morning on the way to school, I heard who,
21 local owners, local news, local agricultural prices,
22 local births and, sadly, local deaths and it's

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1 precisely what you hear today when you visit that
2 station.

3 Today's hearing will take a look back at
4 all the information that we have gleaned from our
5 hearings and is in the record and attempt to analyze
6 those findings.

7 I, like Commissioner Adelstein, hope
8 that we will consider our own minority and diversity
9 committee recommendations that they have made. I
10 thank them for their hard work over the past few
11 years and I hope that we will consider those
12 recommendations in the short-term.

13 I'm glad that we have taken such a
14 thorough, such a long and measured approach to this

process because that is important to do. But it is time for us to get down to work and I look forward to joining any colleagues in crafting rules that recognize the global nature of the world in which we live, while meeting our commitment to localism.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

KEVIN MARTIN: Thank you, Commissioner

Tate.

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Commissioner McDowell.

ROBERT MCDOWELL: Thank you,

Mr. Chairman. In the observance of time, I want to hear from ya'll, so I'll truncate my remarks and just put the whole statement in the record, if possible, but I do want to thank each and every one of you for coming here to the Commission today.

This is an extremely important issue.

This is an extremely personal issue for me to have a localism hearing here in Washington, D.C., which is my home town media market. This is where I was born and raised and actually the McDowell family has worked in the Washington media market.

My mother, Martha Shay McDowell, worked for the Washington Post in the 1970s, a local newspaper some of you have probably heard of. My father was a senior editor for National Geographic Magazine, an international publication, and I was an intern, an intern, no less, for WMAL and WTOP radio.

And the moral of that story is be nice to your interns because some day they might grow up to regulate you.

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In any case, looking forward to all your remarks and when we get to the public comment period as well and without further ado, Mr. Chairman, on with the show.

KEVIN MARTIN: Thank you and thank you all for participating in this important hearing.

All of ya'lls thoughts and advice are going to be critical to us as we go forward.

Establishing and maintaining a system of local broadcasting that is responsive to the unique interests and needs of individual communities is an extremely important policy goal for the Commission. Indeed along with competition and diversity, localism was one of the three goals that underlies all of our media ownership rules.

The Commission is currently engaged in a review of these rules and the testimony we're going to hear today, along with that of all the previous localism hearings, is going to inform the Commission's decision-making not only in the localism proceeding, but also in the media ownership proceeding.

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With that, I'd like to take a moment to review with you the work and the process the Commission has done to date on these related proceedings on media ownership and localism.

In 2003 when we last conducted a review of the media ownership rules, many people expressed concerns about the process and specifically people complained that there weren't enough hearings, that

9 not enough studies were done and there wasn't enough
10 opportunity for public comment and input.

11 And when we began this process last
12 year, the Commission, this process on ownership last
13 year, the process on localism several years ago, the
14 Commission committed to conducting this proceeding
15 in a manner that was going to be open and
16 transparent and that would allow for ample public
17 participation.

18 And I think that's what the Commission
19 has done. As a part of the current review of the
20 media ownership rules, we've held five hearings
21 around the country, costs more than 150,000 dollars,
22 we've listened to and recorded thousands of public

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1 comment. We've spent almost 700,000 dollars on
2 10 independent studies and we put all those studies
3 out for comment and made all of the underlying data
4 available to the public.

5 Several times we've filed, we've allowed
6 for extensions of time to file comments in the
7 record and to date, we've received over 162,000
8 written comments in the proceeding.

9 Similarly, I committed to completing the
10 full inquiry on localism, something that was
11 initiated but stopped under the previous Chairman.

12 Now today we're holding the 6th planned
13 hearing on the topic and all tolled the Commission
14 has devoted more than 160,000 to the hearing from
15 expert witnesses and members of the public on
16 broadcast service to their local communities, we've
17 spent another 350,000 dollars on gathering data that
18 again will be used in localism and on the studies
19 that were conducted on media ownership, along with
20 the specific localism paper, study that was done by
21 Simon Anderson at the University of Virginia on
22 localism and welfare which we made available last

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1 December.

2 Now I know that localism is important
3 to, to many broadcasters who recognize their own
4 success depends on responding to the needs and
5 interests of their local community. And most
6 broadcasters do a good job both airing programming
7 of unique interest to their local community, more
8 generally by contributing the sense of community in
9 their local areas. But it has become apparent,
10 however, that some broadcasters aren't doing all
11 they can or all they should in serving their local
12 communities.

13 And, thus, I've already proposed the
14 Commission to take a number of policy changes and
15 rule changes to ensure that broadcasters better
16 serve their local communities.

17 And these actions are designed to
18 enhance the ability of local citizens regarding --
19 regardless of gender or race to access the broadcast
20 medium to reach their communities, to improve the
21 communication between broadcast licensees and their
22 local communities and identifying local programming,

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1 and to ensure that vitally important local
2 information and viewpoints are provided to the

community.

So in order to ensure that American people have the benefits of a competitive and diverse media marketplace that serves their local communities, we need to create more opportunities for different, new and independent voices to be heard. We need to address the concern that consolidation has limited the number of local outlets available to minorities and new entrants.

The limited number of channels available in the broadcast television and radio spectrum bands and the high start-up costs of building a station are significant barriers to entering into broadcasting. It can be very difficult for anyone, nonetheless a new voice, to find an available channel and gather enough capital to build or buy a new broadcast station.

That's why that I propose to the other Commissioners and the Commission adopted earlier this year the recommendation that Congress, that it

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create and renew its new -- its tax certificate program designed to encourage small firms, including those owned by minorities and women, to acquire communications businesses, including broadcast stations.

We all know that providing tax advantages has worked in the past to encourage greater diversity of ownership and to open the doors for entry by small businesses, including disadvantaged firms and entities owned by women and minorities.

As detailed in our recent Section 257 report to Congress, I support the establishment of a new program that would permit the deferral of taxes on any capital gains involved in such a transaction, as long as the gain is re-invested in a qualifying communications entity.

The new program would also provide tax credits to sellers who also are financing it through small firms and other measures might include restrictions on the size of the purchaser or minimum holding period for the purchased licenses or a cap

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even on the total eligible value to the transaction.

Now I also recognize that we can't rely on Congress alone to act and I think there's things the Commission itself can do and take a number of steps to help small and independently-owned businesses to overcome these obstacles.

First, I think the Commission should allow these similar qualifying designated entities, small and independently-owned businesses, to lease some of an existing television station's excess digital broadcast spectrum to distribute their own programming.

This new station would be able to air its own programs and obtain all the accompanying rights and obligations of other broadcast stations, such as public interest obligations and the ability to carry, and the requirement to carry local programming.

Now there's already a real world example

20 of a similar type of arrangement. Post Newsweek
21 provides for carriage of Latino alternative TV, LATV
22 programming on its multi-cast channels in Miami,

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1 Orlando, Houston, San Antonio and I've circulated a
2 proposal to permit this practice last March and
3 continue to encourage all my colleagues to adopt it.

4 Now while we also should continue to
5 look for ways to facilitate minorities ability to
6 purchase full power broadcast stations like the tax
7 certificate, this ability to lease broadcast
8 channels could quickly open up capacity in local
9 communities all across the country, considerably
10 enhancing the ability of small and
11 independently-owned businesses and other qualified
12 designated entities to reach their entire community
13 with a free programming stream.

14 Now the Commission already has in place
15 similar policies to create additional opportunities
16 in radio and cable through leased access rules and
17 low powered FM and I believe that these rules could
18 actually be changed to be, provide more useful and
19 to provide for additional access as well.

20 In response to some of the concerns
21 expressed by my, my, my colleagues and by some of
22 the members of the panel today, like the Media

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1 Access Project, we propose that soon the Commission
2 is going to amend its leased access rules and its
3 program carriage rules to be more effective.
4 Neither of these regulatory regimes have
5 successfully achieved their intended goal of
6 facilitating the ability of diverse and local
7 viewpoints to reach their local audiences and
8 critics have long argued that the local leased
9 access regime has dramatically been underutilized
10 because of an artificially high rate.

11 And I also have heard from many
12 potential programmers that the program carriage
13 rules are ineffective and because of a distorted
14 complaint process and we'll address that issue as
15 well.

16 Now the low power FM rules, too, I think
17 can be improved. While they've been a significant
18 success in local communities, I think they can be
19 improved. Again, as Prometheus and the Media Access
20 Project have noted, there are things we can do to
21 amend our rules to promote better entry and ensure
22 local responsiveness on the radio side.

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1 Now last January I actually proposed to
2 all of my Commissioners and it's still pending
3 before us to amend our LPFM rules, to take a series
4 of steps, all of which were recommended by
5 Prometheus and the Media Access Project, to do
6 things like eliminating the rule prohibiting the low
7 power FM transfers and assignments, to allow the
8 sale of, of those, to reinstate the original low
9 power FM rule that all authorization holders be
10 local to the community and limit ownership to one
11 station per licensee, to clarify that repetitious and
12 automated programming doesn't meet the local
13 origination requirements, to prohibit the programs

14 from being broadcast more than twice to meet the
15 local origination requirements, to expand the
16 definition of local for, for rural communities, to
17 permit AM broadcast stations to operate on FM
18 translator stations, to permit some changes of more
19 than 50 percent of the membership of the governing
20 Board, and finally, to impose a cap on the number of
21 applications accepted into the, in the 2003
22 translator filing window, thereby protecting LPFM

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1 service.
2 And I think it's important that almost
3 all of those proposals that again have been pending
4 before the Commission for almost a year were all
5 advocated by some of the members of the panel today.
6 We've also heard from, recommendations
7 from our, the Commission's Diversity Federal
8 Advisory Committee and the Minority Media and
9 Telecommunications Council that we take some
10 additional steps to facilitate the ability of
11 qualified designated entities to more easily get
12 into broadcasting and I think that we've tried to be
13 responsive.

14 Last March, again, I proposed to the
15 Commission and it's still pending before all my
16 Commissioners if they would all vote it, that they
17 take several other policy changes and rule changes
18 to implement their exact recommendations.
19 For example, we proposed that we allow
20 these designated entities to purchase expired
21 construction permits and be allotted additional time
22 to construct and build those broadcast facilities.

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1 I've also proposed that we amend our,
2 our attribution rules to allow for additional
3 financing of our so-called equity plus debt rule.
4 Again, this was something that was, that was urged
5 on us by the Diversity Federal Advisory Committee
6 and by minority and media and telecommunications
7 advocates that would assist those small businesses
8 in acquiring broadcast stations, retaining existing
9 stations and building out these construction permits
10 that are available.

11 All of these proposals were suggested by
12 outside advocacy groups and have been pending at the
13 Commission already for more than six months.

14 I've also heard from the Coalition of
15 Public Interest Groups that broadcasters should air
16 a certain amount of different types of content to
17 ensure they are being locally responsive.

18 Well I do have some concerns with some
19 types of mandatory minimums, for example,
20 requirements for free air times for politicians.

21 I did propose last March that the
22 Commission make a comprehensive change to the kind

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1 of information that broadcasters have to report in
2 their process for their renewal. If broadcasters
3 mean it when they tell us they're already providing
4 local programming, local news and local information,
5 then they shouldn't object to telling the Commission
6 in detail what they're actually doing.

7 And specifically I propose that

8 broadcasters complete and provide every quarter an
9 enhanced form in which they would describe and
10 specify the local civic affairs programming, the
11 local electoral affairs programming, the amount of
12 public service announcements they're providing,
13 whether they're for free or whether they've been
14 paid and independently produce programming that the
15 station airs that would be meeting the needs of its
16 local audience.

17 And I think the most important step is
18 to first require the broadcasters to be providing
19 that information on a detailed basis. And I think
20 that broadcasters would need to provide this
21 enhanced information not only in their file, but
22 also in their, on their websites and make them

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1 available on their broadcast stations, association's
2 websites, as well.

3 Now, I've also circulated a number of
4 other proposals to my fellow Commissioners aimed at
5 enhancing citizens acts as to and broadcast carriage
6 of local programming, I've circulated proposals to
7 amend carry rules to ensure the ability of consumers
8 to access all of their free local broadcast
9 channels.

10 I see that Jim Goodmon is here and I
11 know that some of the good work that he's doing down
12 in Raleigh in providing additional local information
13 on his multi-cast signals and I think the ability to
14 make sure that those are getting carried to all
15 consumers is an important aspect of being able to
16 make sure that broadcasters have the opportunity to
17 provide that programming.

18 And I also circulated a proposal to
19 clarify that all local broadcasters can refuse to
20 air any network programming in order to make sure
21 that they're airing programming of greater local
22 concern to their communities.

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1 And finally, last March I also
2 recommended that the Commission adopt a notice to
3 consider requiring a physical presence of, so
4 someone's actually at every broad -- radio
5 broadcasting facility during all hours of operation.
6 Requiring that all radio stations be attended would
7 only increase the ability of the station to provide
8 information of a local nature in the community and
9 it would particularly be important during the event
10 of a severe emergency, a local weather emergency or
11 any other kind of local emergency that there be a
12 requirement that all operations be attended will
13 increase the likelihood that each broadcaster would
14 be capable of relying -- relaying critical
15 life-saving information to the public.

16 And I think this would address some of
17 the concerns that have been raised by what, for
18 example, happened in, in Minot that Commissioner
19 Adelstein raised concerns about.

20 Now I think the FCC needs to be
21 committed to ensuring that broadcasters adequately
22 serve their local communities and to expand

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1 opportunities for entry into media ownership and

media programming and to that end, I believe we should act on the issues that I've already discussed today. And I appreciate that many of you have put those ideas forward and will continue to put forward additional recommendations and I think there is yet more to be done.

Now the proposals I've made thus far are not the end of the story, but we should not be inactive as we continue to receive further input. We can and should move forward on the proposals that are currently before the Commission.

I have high hopes that working with all my colleagues and others we'll be able to continue to make progress on these issues as again, as I said, many of these are proposals that have been put forth by the, many of the panelists today.

Finally, before we begin with the Media Bureau's presentation and the panels, which I very much appreciate their, their willingness to come forward, I want to respond to two of the things that were raised by some of my fellow Commissioners.

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First, Commissioner Copps I think said he wanted to understand what the final outcome of this would end up being, including I think he said both an NPRM with specific recommendations in the timetable for final Commission action and I think that those are the kind of things that I think that we are going to be committed to end up being doing. And Commissioner Adelstein raised two points to respond to, first he said that he cited polling data only here because it was what the law required because we have to act in the public interest.

Actually, everything we have to do here is in the public interest, so to the extent that the, what the public thinks about it in polling data, it would be just as applicable that everything that we do, so while I don't disagree that the public interests and polling data should matter here, it should matter everywhere, because we always have to act in the public interest. That's your underlying fundamental requirement here at the Commission.

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whether it's on this issue or on what a majority of people think about issues like (inaudible).

And finally, he said that he had been prohibited from meeting with the staff people that were in charge of the localism issue; well that's not true at all. The person who's in charge of it now under Chairman Martin is not the same person who was in charge of it under Chairman Powell.

And he's more than happy to meet with Monica Desai any time he'd like to because she's the staff person who has been in charge of this program and these issues since I ended up becoming Chairman.

So with that, I actually I want to turn it over to Monica Desai to begin to do a summary of where we are on some of the local issues and the issues that have been raised so far in the record.

MONICA DESAI: Good morning, Mr. Chairman, and Commissioners.

19 In August of 2003, the Commission
20 launched a localism in broadcasting initiative to
21 review localism practices among broadcasters. As
22 part of this proceeding, on July 1st, 2004, they

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1 issued a notice of inquiry on the subject. The
2 Media Bureau is reviewing the record in this
3 proceeding to date.

4 At the table with me are Bill Friedman
5 and Jeremy Kisell of the Media Bureau. Jeremy will
6 summarize the record to date.

7 JEREMY KISELL: Good morning,
8 Mr. Chairman, and Commissioners.
9 Sorry.

10 During the course of the 2002 review of
11 its structural broadcast ownership rules, the
12 Commission received public comments indicating that
13 broadcasters may be failing to meet the needs of
14 their local communities.

15 In response the Commission opened a
16 separate inquiry proceeding to seek input on a
17 number of issues related to broadcast localism. It
18 sought input from the public on how broadcasters
19 communicate with the members of the communities that
20 they serve to identify interests and needs and how
21 well they are treating those issues in their
22 programming, including specific questions about

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1 political programming and the state of broadcast
2 service to all community segments, large and small.

3 The NOI asked whether the Commission
4 should adopt new policies, practices or rules
5 designed directly to promote localism in
6 broadcasting and if so, what those policies,
7 practices or rules should be.

8 In the alternative, it inquired if it
9 should continue to rely on market forces in the
10 existing issue responsive programming requirements
11 that ensure that broadcasters meet their localism
12 obligations.

13 To date the Commission has received more
14 than 82,800 written comments from broadcasters,
15 broadcast industry organizations, public interest
16 groups and members of the public. Many broadcast
17 entities submitted information outlining the process
18 that each follows to determine the needs and
19 interests of people within their respective
20 communities of license. Licensee commentors also
21 provided detailed data concerning the amount, nature
22 and variety of the programming that each station

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1 airs to meet local needs.

2 A number of public interest
3 organizations submitted studies of various aspects
4 of the nature and quality of local broadcast
5 programming today, many questioning the performance
6 of broadcasters.

7 In addition to these written comments,
8 the Commission has conducted five localism field
9 hearings throughout the country, in Charlotte, North
10 Carolina, San Antonio, Texas, Rapid City, South
11 Dakota, Monterey, California, and Portland, Maine.

12 Of course the 6th hearing is being

13 conducted here today in Washington, D.C.

14 During these proceedings attended by
15 various Commissioners and Commission staff, the
16 Agency has engaged in dialogue with industry and
17 civic leaders, broadcasters and academics as well as
18 members of the public to obtain information
19 concerning the issues articulated in the NOI.

20 To date, the hearings have included
21 75 formal presentations from scheduled panelists as
22 well as 391 open mic presentations from anyone else

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1 in attendance who wanted to be heard.

2 The written materials and transcripts of
3 the oral testimony gathered at those hearings as
4 well as all written comments filed in response to
5 the NOI have been placed into the record in the
6 localism proceeding and are available on the
7 Commission's Website.

8 Some commentors state their belief that
9 broadcasters take seriously their obligation to air
10 locally responsive programming and that many
11 broadcasters have been inventive in airing locally
12 oriented news, public affairs and political
13 programming.

14 For example, they note that some
15 broadcasters participate in formal meetings
16 sponsored by the respective State broadcasters
17 associations at which community leaders, local
18 politicians, executives of non-profit organizations,
19 representatives of minority groups and public
20 interest advocates share the issues that they
21 believe to be important with them, while others
22 periodically conduct focus groups and annual viewer

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1 tracking phone calls that seek feedback and the
2 identification of community interests.

3 Other commentors state that broadcasters
4 include regular and proactive news reporting on
5 local stories, information about weather
6 emergencies, weekly programs and specials and
7 material focusing on minority groups or children.

8 Some state that stations also provide
9 access to political candidates with programming
10 featuring candidates and other political experts
11 discussing issues of the day.

12 Some commentors note that broadcasters
13 also provide local groups and non-profit
14 organizations with support in media access. Some
15 licensees state that their public interest
16 programming includes news magazines, consumer
17 segments during newscasts and other non-traditional
18 formats that are more likely to engage their
19 audiences and provoke interest in and discussion of
20 important local events and issues.

21 Other commentors note that broadcast
22 stations provide crucial information in the case of

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1 emergencies and must continue to serve this public
2 safety role in their weather and other programming.

3 In addition, many stations have reported
4 that they offer programming directed to underserved
5 elements of their audience, such as minority groups
6 and the economically disadvantaged.

A number of commentators indicate that stations face increased competition from nationally-oriented program sources such as cable and satellite.

Other commentators, however, state that broadcast licensees devote little time to meeting these important obligations. These non-licensee commentators contend that stations are making inadequate efforts to serve their local communities and question the validity of claims by broadcasters that they are providing substantial locally-oriented programming.

Instead, these parties maintain that financial considerations exacerbated by the de-regulation of broadcasting that began in the 1980s have resulted in a critical decrease in the

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quality and quantity of programs offered by licensees that is responsive to the needs and interests of the communities that they serve.

Commentors note what they perceive to be a continual decline in the amount of local and network broadcast news coverage of substantive campaign election issues in recent years as well as the local -- lack of local public affairs programming especially in underserved communities.

Some commentors also note the lack of programming diversity and criticize broadcasters for barring access by independent producers of programming and for not developing and promoting local artists.

As noted in the NOI, it is the obligation of the Commission to ensure that broadcasters affirmatively meet their obligations to serve their communities of interests. We believe that the record in this proceeding provides valuable guidance to assist the Commission in obtaining that objective.

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We at the Media Bureau look forward to

hearing from the witnesses that are scheduled to speak today and after considering their views and the rest of the record, evidence in this proceeding, sharing with the Commission our recommendations in our localism report.

Thank you.

KEVIN MARTIN: Thank you. At this point we're going to end up turning it over to our moderator, Lou Sigalos.

JONATHAN ADELSTEIN: Mr. Chairman, you might have some questions for the Bureau.

KEVIN MARTIN: What's that?

JONATHAN ADELSTEIN: I think we might have some questions for the Bureau, I don't know --

KEVIN MARTIN: Did you want to --

MICHAEL COPPS: Well I'd just be curious, it sounds like, I heard we had 82,000 or 162,000 or however many comments in, I'd like to be clear on what that public record is and in very general terms you expressed some of the concerns, but what are the two or three themes that really stand out, what are the areas of public concern is

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1 question number one.

2 And then number two, as you look at the
3 record of the five specific markets that we visited,
4 are you able to make any differentiations between
5 those markets that we visited in terms of the
6 presence or absence of localism, where the
7 satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the people who
8 live there with the amount of localism that they are
9 receiving or not receiving?

10 MONICA DESAI: Well I'll respond to your
11 second question first, which is whether we've seen
12 any differentiation among the different markets and
13 that, we'll have to get back to you on that one,
14 we'll have to take a look at the record in that
15 regard and try to distinguish that way.

16 With respect to the first question, some
17 general themes or areas of concern, as Jeremy noted
18 in his report, you know, some commentators suggest
19 that broadcasters don't devote enough time to
20 meeting obligations related to localism.

21 They say that there needs to be more,
22 some commentators say there need to be more

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1 locally-oriented programming. They, they also, some
2 commentators complain about the decline in the amount
3 of local and network broadcast news coverage of
4 issues such as campaign and election related issues.

5 And then there's also commentators, there
6 are a group of commentators who note, who suggest that
7 there's a lack of programming diversity and
8 criticize broadcasters for barring access by
9 independent producers of programming and for not
10 developing and promoting local artists.

11 MICHAEL COPPS: When the localism task
12 force was announced back in 2003, it was stated that
13 it would conduct studies to rigorously measure
14 localism and how it may be affected by FCC rules and
15 report back within 12 months. Obviously we didn't
16 make the 12 months, but how many studies have, have
17 been done in pursuit of the localism initiative?

18 KEVIN MARTIN: Monica?

19 KEVIN MARTIN: Commissioner Copps, if I
20 can, if I can enter a response.

21 As you indicated, Chairman Powell had
22 said that he would produce a significant number of

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1 studies and produce them within 12 months of the
2 time this was initiated in 2004. As you know,
3 because we were both on the Commission at the time,
4 when I took over as Chairman in March of 2005, that
5 time frame had expired and indeed we were supposed
6 to have already completed the entire localism
7 proceeding and those studies had not been conducted.

8 As a matter of fact, there was one study
9 that was conducted by Professor Simon Anderson at
10 the University of Virginia, that was submitted to us
11 as a first draft, it's been published since last
12 December.

13 The other data that was gathered is the
14 data that was actually used for the 10 studies that
15 were, for some of the 10 studies that were done in
16 the ownership proceeding.

17 But you're right, when Chairman Powell

18 left, those studies had not been conducted.

19 MICHAEL COPPS: My only point is the
20 necessity to proceed carefully here. I know we have
21 the one study that was done by Simon Anderson, I
22 think it's 20 pages long.

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1 I doubt that it's been peer reviewed,
2 correct me if I'm wrong, and I think questions like
3 are there differences between the markets that we
4 visited are really important.

5 Are there differences between big cities
6 and small cities in terms of our public interest
7 oversight responsibilities.

8 So I hope as you go through this record,
9 all 80 or 160,000 comments, whatever it is, you do
10 so deliberately, as I said before, all deliberate
11 speed, I'm all for that, but I don't want to rush to
12 any conclusions here if we haven't done the research
13 or we haven't really combed the record and looked
14 for those kind of differentiations and nuances that
15 are going to be so vitally important in forming the
16 record and forming the wisdom of any decisions that
17 we may make.

18 KEVIN MARTIN: Of course. Of course
19 since, since Monica Desai and the Bureau aren't
20 making any recommendations today, since, since all
21 they're doing is just a brief summary of what we've
22 already done, of course they'll end up doing that

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1 for --

2 MICHAEL COPPS: I look forward to it.

3 KEVIN MARTIN: So I wouldn't, like I
4 think she always ends up doing when she's leaving
5 the Bureau, I'm confident she'll be end up doing
6 that.

7 JONATHAN ADELSTEIN: I had a question
8 about the record, as well.

9 KEVIN MARTIN: Sure.

10 JONATHAN ADELSTEIN: You've looked at
11 the 162,000 comments I take it that have been
12 submitted and studied into the record. The question
13 is out of those comments that were received, how
14 many public witnesses called in the localism
15 proceeding for loosening of the media ownership
16 limits as a means of enhancing localism?

17 MONICA DESAI: I have to get back to you
18 on that.

19 JONATHAN ADELSTEIN: How about at the
20 public hearings, just if we just looked at the
21 public hearings that were held, the public witnesses
22 that came up, did any public witness say that it was

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1 a good idea to loosen the ownership rules in order
2 to enhance localism, because I think you and I
3 attended all of them?

4 MONICA DESAI: I actually haven't
5 attended all of them, I've been in the Bureau for
6 about six months, but I'll have to go back and check
7 the transcript of all of the witness testimony and
8 then I'll get back to you on that.

9 KEVIN MARTIN: I think that, Jonathan, I
10 think that when we were in San Antonio I think I can
11 remember only one, I can remember the reaction of

the audience, as well, that's the reason why I remember there was only one that I think called for it, so, so, but certainly I don't think that there's been more than a handful at any of the, all of hearings we've attended.

JONATHAN ADELSTEIN: That was my recollection as well, I appreciate it.

KEVIN MARTIN: I think, like I said, I, and the only reason I can remember one is because the, the, the boos from the audience when the person said it in San Antonio was I think the way that we

might recall it.

JONATHAN ADELSTEIN: Yeah, I think I remembered one, but it might have been two or three, I didn't know if I had missed a couple.

KEVIN MARTIN: Well I'm sorry if I underestimated.

JONATHAN ADELSTEIN: You know, just real quick getting back to you, I appreciate your response to my concerns about the staff meeting, I just wanted to clarify, I believe that we should be able to meet with any staff we want, any time, not just those that are hand-picked by you or by anybody else. I think it's important that we have access to anybody on the staff, they work for the entire Commission, not just us.

KEVIN MARTIN: I think that, Jonathan, we can end up debating if you'd like, we're taking time away from our panel as to why we're all here, but what I would say is that absolutely, but if you're going to ask questions about a project they're no longer in charge of and don't know the answers to and, indeed, they were doing it with a

former Chairman, you're going to not get answers about where we are, so if you want to talk about a particular topic that we're working on, they can be there as well to give you a background, but the people who are working on it now would need to be there as well because if not, those answers might be misinterpreted and, but again, I think at this point it's probably important for us to try to move on to the panelists. I know that many of them are anxious to end up trying to participate.

So, I do think it's important to alert everyone, including the audience, because we're going to continue this straight on through and move on to public comment after this, occasionally individual Commissioners will get up and go to the restroom or will go get something to drink, but they'll be right back and we'll continue on straight through with everyone's public comments after that.

And so Louis, if you want to, Louis, if you could actually proceed now, that would be great.

LOUIS SIGALOS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Commissioners.

As we move to our panel discussion, I'd like to review the ground rules very briefly.

Panelists, each of you have five minutes to make your remarks. I urge you to stay within that time limit in order to leave as much time as

possible for the public comment period.

Members of the audience, please listen respectfully to the panelists, even if you disagree with the views they express. I know that the issues we're discussing today arouse a lot of passion, but for this hearing to run smoothly and be successful, we need to maintain basic decorum and avoid unnecessary interruptions. I thank you.

Participating in this panel are Marcellus Alexander, executive vice president for NAB Television, president of NAB Television Foundation.

Bob Edwards, national first vice president of AFTRA, hosts the Bob Edwards show XM satellite radio and former host NPR's morning edition.

Lisa Fager Bediako, president and

co-founder Industry Ears.

Kim Grandy, president, National Organization for Women.

Jim Goodman, president and CEO, Capital Broadcasting.

Wade Henderson, president and CEO, Leadership Conference on Civil Rights.

Dan Isett, director of corporate and Government Affairs, Parents, Television Council.

Reverend Jesse L. Jackson, Senior, president and founder, Rainbow PUSH Coalition.

Andrew Schwartzman, president and CEO, Media Access Project.

Christopher Sterling, president -- professor of media and public affairs, public policy, public administration, George Washington University.

S. Derek Turner, research director, Free Press.

And Mark Cooper, director of research, Consumer Federation of America.

Mr. Alexander.

MARCELLUS ALEXANDER: Good morning, Chairman Martin, and Commissioners. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.

My name is Marcellus Alexander, I'm executive vice president for television at the National Association of Broadcasters. I also serve as president of NAB EF, an organization that develops educational programs to help women and people of color advance in the broadcasting business.

During my time in broadcasting I've managed and been part owner of a successful radio station in Detroit and managed television stations in Baltimore and Philadelphia. I know firsthand the special relationship that exists between broadcaster and his or her community.

You've heard from broadcasters around the country that localism is the heart of everything they do. Well, believe it. While detractors may say broadcasters are not provided to committing localism, the volumes of examples both in the record and throughout these hearings belie that conclusion.

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1 In addition, such conclusions are inconsistent with
2 one fundamental economic fact, broadcasters compete
3 with each other, every minute of every day to
4 attract local viewers to their station.
5 To do that, local, relevant programming
6 is essential. Without it, viewers simply change the
7 channel and go elsewhere in the market to get it.
8 That is why we have one of the most
9 vibrant over-the-air broadcasting systems in the
10 world, in fact, the most vibrant. We're proud of
11 the record established in this proceeding.
12 Broadcasters in every community and the local
13 constituents that they serve have appeared in force
14 to defend their public service record. Governors,
15 Mayors, Police Chiefs and countless others have
16 stood behind the broadcasters record of strong
17 service to their communities in cities as large as
18 Chicago and as small as Portland, Maine.
19 But it is broadcasters commitment to
20 their daily local news, local programming and
21 emergency information during times of crisis that
22 sits at the center of their local service.

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1 Television stations produce more local news than
2 ever before.
3 In this proceeding, most broadcasters
4 said that on average they aired 25 to 40 hours of
5 local news each week. You also heard that beyond
6 local news programming, radio and television
7 stations provide a variety of other locally-produced
8 content, including programming on sports, religion,
9 the arts and other community-oriented issues.
10 Indeed local broadcasting is enjoying a
11 renaissance in locally-produced programming.
12 Broadcasters unique and important role in providing
13 emergency information was never more evident than it
14 was during Katrina and the recent California
15 wildfires. In both of these communities,
16 broadcasters dedicated themselves to getting
17 information to those who needed it most.
18 As their own communities burned,
19 television and radio stations in San Diego and
20 Los Angeles maintained a constant on-air vigilance
21 alerting citizens with up-to-the-second changes in
22 evacuation orders. In fact, aiding emergency

0066

1 officials with one of the largest evacuations in
2 American history.
3 I'd like to show you an example of just
4 one of the many broadcasters who covered this event.
5 Let's go to the video, please.
6 (Video clip playing.)
7 "It was a devastation and loss as fire
8 storms swept across Southern California and KABC TV
9 was there from the very beginning. In a crisis, our
10 local news is the first place people turn for the
11 information they need to keep safe. They expect
12 their local station to be there and we do our best
13 to exceed that expectation with information specific
14 to the situation, their neighbor, their needs.
15 "On Sunday when the winds began to blow
16 and the fires broke out, we jumped into action,

17 cancelling regular programming and commercials,
18 marshalling the full resources of eyewitness news to
19 bring non-stop coverage of this critical situation.
20 "Over the next three days KABC TV would
21 air 41 hours of uninterrupted commercial free news
22 coverage, calling in all available personnel,

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1 cancelling vacations and days off and extending
2 shifts to make non-stop coverage possible. Carried
3 live, uninterrupted news conferences by the Governor
4 and local authorities about each fire situation. We
5 broadcast important information gathered by our
6 reporters and photographers in the heart of the fire
7 zone and ran additional live updates and on-air
8 calls throughout the night.

9 "Our coverage also used the special
10 technology KABC has been so proud to introduce to
11 Southern California, our two helicopters provided
12 the best overview of the unfolding fire situations,
13 our live Doppler radar showed detailed wind and smoke
14 patterns allowing viewers to see how the wind storm
15 was unfolding and affecting the fire and smoke in
16 the air.

17 "But our use of technology to serve our
18 viewers didn't stop on air. In this digital age we
19 created special online tools and resources at
20 ABC7.com to allow instant 24-hour access to
21 information on evacuation sites, weather
22 information, road and school closures and emergency

0068

1 alerts.

2 "Our Web department created a special
3 interactive Google map with links to all the fire
4 locations and the stories of information specific to
5 those fires. We streamed live news conferences and
6 portions of our live broadcast coverage on our
7 website so even those in offices or places without
8 access to television could get the information they
9 need. We sent out cell phone text alerts and
10 E-mailed breaking news weather and headline alerts.

11 "ABC7.com generated nearly 12 million
12 page views over the last week with nearly a million
13 and a half unique visitors to our site, most who
14 came directly to our site. Nearly a half a million
15 people viewed our fire site Google map. Over
16 300,000 got information on evacuations and closures
17 and nearly 300,000 people watched our live streaming
18 video.

19 "KABC TV's commitment did not stop when
20 the fires died down, before the week was even over
21 we had launched an ambitious on-air relief drive in
22 cooperation with the Red Cross chapters in L.A.,

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1 Orange and San Bernadino counties to raise funds for
2 the fire victims.

3 "I'm glad you guys are doing it for
4 everybody as well, we appreciate it. We've been
5 watching the newscasts all week, it's just been so
6 heart breaking watching all the families and my
7 heart goes out to them.

8 "So many people are displaced by the
9 fires and don't have a thing, the normal comforts of
10 home right now and I think it's really important for